



USAID
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USAID Monthly Newsletter

Hot News

Agreement on HIV/AIDS prevention activities reached in Turkmenistan

On March 8, USAID and the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding that officially launched USAID's cooperation with the Government of Turkmenistan on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections in the country. The agreement will be implemented by the USAID CAPACITY project, which has been working in four other Central Asia's countries since 2005. CAPACITY will assist the ministry and other relevant bodies in the implementation of the National Program for Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS from 2005-2010 and help monitor the program's results using internationally-recognized indicators. The project will also provide youth with healthy alternatives to drug involvement and with information about protection against sexually transmitted infections and HIV.



The MOU was signed by USAID Country Representative Ashley Moretz and new Minister of Health Ata Serdarov .
Photo: USAID

Regional

U.S. Assistance Showcased for International Women's Day

International Women's Day (March 8), widely celebrated in the region, provided USAID an excellent opportunity to inform local communities about its assistance in women and children's health. In Kazakhstan, a press conference presented the results of USAID and ExxonMobil's third Global Development Alliance (GDA) project focused on strengthening maternal and child health; opened three Birth Preparedness Schools (also supported through this GDA); and launched a new, fourth GDA. Like the previous USAID and ExxonMobil projects, the fourth GDA will strengthen maternal and child health in Astana. It will be implemented by USAID's ZdravPlus project and its sub-grantee, the Kazakhstan Association of Family Practitioners. The initiative has already trained more than 100 clinicians and taught birth preparedness courses for over 2,000 pregnant women. The event coincided with the annual address to the nation by the President of Kazakhstan, who emphasized reforms to maternal and infant health, and received broad media coverage.



In Tajikistan, the U.S. Ambassador (on the right) joined the Minister of Health (in the center) to recognize women-health professionals.
Photo: USAID

Another widely publicized event was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, at the City Health Center No. 1, which is supported through the USAID ZdravPlus project. On March 9 the project recognized ten women health system leaders, doctors, and nurses who have made valuable contributions to improving primary health care services in Tajikistan. Since 2005, ZdravPlus has worked with health professionals at this health facility to build a Center of Excellence that demonstrates best practices in primary health care and serves as a model of family medicine practice in Tajikistan.



Regional Electricity Market Assistance Program (REMAP) Launches its Activities for Region's Energy Specialists

In early February, REMAP, a three-year USAID program implemented by USEA, gathered 55 participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia for a regional electricity market development workshop. Representatives from ministries, regulatory agencies, transmission companies, market operators, and regional energy organizations discussed incentives and barriers to electricity trade among Central Asia and other regions. Participants prepared a workplan to develop market models for Central Asia that would increase electricity trade through market structures, stimulate investments in modernization of energy sector, and support regional economic growth.

Later that month in Bishkek, REMAP held a workshop for engineers from Kyrgyzstan's and Tajikistan's national transmission companies and dispatch centers. The workshop focused on the use of a modern transmission planning model for analyzing, optimizing, and planning of the energy systems. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan the model will be used to identify potential bottlenecks in the transmission systems, increase efficiency of energy system operations, improve reliability of the electricity network, ensure electricity supply to consumers, and reduce constraints to regional electricity trade.



REMAP's workshop discussed how to enhance regional electricity trade.
Photo: REMAP

Kazakhstan

Judicial Mentorship Program Expanded to New Regions

Thanks to USAID's Kazakhstan Judicial Assistance Project (KJAP), the number of Kazakhstan's oblasts (regions) that have judicial mentorship programs has increased from two to ten over the past year. The mentoring of new judges by a senior colleague is a proven and useful means of continuing education in the judiciary. KJAP began introducing judicial mentorship program in new regions of Kazakhstan in September 2006 by developing materials and training a pool of volunteer judges, who, in turn, provide mentorship training. Together with KJAP, these judges then led two regional trainings for new mentors, who in turn set up mentorship programs in their courts. The program, like other activities by KJAP, enjoys strong support from the local judiciary. This support, as well as the cadre of project-trained local trainers, should ensure that the mentorship program continue after the USAID project ends this summer.



Judge Inessa Kuanova mentors her new colleagues in the North-Kazakhstan Oblast.
Photo: KJAP

Kyrgyzstan

A Network of Veterinarian Centers to Improve Cattle-Breeding Sector in Southern Kyrgyzstan

On January 31 USAID, Mercy Corps, and local government representatives opened the Veterinary Service and Artificial Insemination Center in Nookat, Osh Oblast. This is the first of the nine centers to be opened in southern Kyrgyzstan with assistance from the USAID and Mercy Corps Community Development Initiative (CDI) project. CDI was designed to address problems related to deterioration of livestock health and productivity, which



USAID Acting Country Representative Ken McNamara and the Osh Governor opened an artificial insemination center in Osh Oblast.
Photo: USAID



has lead to decreased quantity and quality of meat and dairy in the region. The project helped seven clusters of communities form Local Economic Development Councils, which then identified and prioritized economic development initiatives for their area. Several of the councils selected veterinary service and artificial insemination centers as a priority and received CDI's co-funding for their opening. A network of centers will improve the quality of livestock breeds, veterinary service, and citizen information about livestock health, breeding, and care. CDI will also support a 12-month training program for local veterinarians.

U.S. Study Tour Gives Start to Craftsmen Association

Upon return from their Community Connections study tour in the U.S., ten female artisans organized an association of craftsmen of Naryn and Issykkul Oblasts "NAISK – Ohio." As members of small local organizations, producing mostly national felt rugs and souvenirs for tourists, the women felt that joining into an association will improve their work and incomes. Each association member works with numerous women, children, and elderly people in remote villages of the country, helping them earn income from craft-making by selling their crafts in larger cities. The association has already received official registration from the Ministry of Justice and is working to create a web site, brochures, and catalogs in time for the tourist season.



Ten participants of a USAID-funded study tour registered a professional association.
Photo: Community Connections

USAID Assists the Government of Kyrgyzstan in Developing a Policy for the Use of the State-Owned Land Reserve

At a conference in February, the USAID Land Reform and Market Development Project presented to the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan, national and local government agencies, and the general public its findings and recommendations on the use of the Land Redistribution Fund. USAID's project is assisting the Government of Kyrgyzstan in developing a policy for the use of the fund, which holds and manages 25% of the country's arable land that was kept in the state ownership during the land reform. The conference featured a presentation about the USAID's pilot program on the use of the LRF lands, discussed future administration of the LRF; and considered results of public hearings on the issue. It is expected that the Government of Kyrgyzstan will form a working group to develop a strategy for the use of the fund with USAID's assistance.



National and local officials, stakeholders, and legislators discussed the use of the Kyrgyz State-owned land reserve.
Photo: USAID Land Reform and Market

Tajikistan

Participants of a USAID Program Increase Profits by \$1 Million

Tajik farmers participating in the USAID-funded Water User Association Support Project increased their profitability by an estimated \$1 million from their 6,300 hectares of irrigated farm land in 2006. Members of 15 participating water user associations gained additional profits from increased harvests of wheat, fruits, cotton, and vegetables. Wheat and orchard harvests have nearly tripled, vegetable and strawberry yields doubled, while cotton production increased from 1.8 to 2.8 tons per hectare. The Water User Association Support Project (implemented by Winrock International) works with those who are most affected most by country's degraded water systems. The project has helped to set up water user associations and provides training in irrigation renovation, operation, and management. Project participants learn to make investment decisions needed to maintain and improve on-farm systems and resolve conflicts and long standing water management and delivery problems.



The USAID-funded WUASP project increased farmers' harvests.
Photo: USAID



Turkmenistan

Awareness Campaigns Help Keep Children Healthy

On February 2, representatives of USAID and the local government presented awards to the winners of a Keeping Children Healthy contest in rural Koney-Urgench District, Dashoguz Province. The campaign, launched by USAID's ZdravPlus project and the Ministry of Health in November 2006, was devoted to the prevention of acute respiratory infections. Eight teams of nurses competed to demonstrate their effective work with mothers, by giving them clear and simple information, preparing informational posters, and designing and distributing bulletins aimed at preventing the infections. Since August 2002, Zdrav Plus has reached more than 35,000 Turkmenistanis through 21 campaigns in ten pilot sites across all five provinces of the country. More than 500 nurses have participated in campaigns that raise the awareness of nurses and mothers about dangerous symptoms of child diseases. The campaigns advise mothers when to call for the doctor and nurses - when to decrease hospitalization times for children, thus reducing child morbidity and mortality through improved early detection and timely treatment.



ZdravPlus promotes awareness about children's health in Turkmenistan.
Photo: ZdravPlus.

USAID Helps Improve Infrastructure

On February 2, three communities in Boldumsaz District, Dashoguz Province celebrated the completion of infrastructural projects supported by USAID's Water Users Association Assistance Program (WUAAP). The program helped start up a community flourmill, restore irrigation and drainage canals, and install an electric line and an irrigation pump. The flourmill will help the more than 2,300 community members in Boldumsaz reduce the distance and time traveled for processing their grain. The two other projects will reduce the water table and provide reliable irrigation for 350 hectares of land, thereby assisting 850 community members to increase their agricultural productivity. Over the past two years, the WUAAP supported 15 such initiatives by rural farmers groups in Mary and Dashoguz Provinces.



USAID E&E Assistant Administrator-designate Dr. Douglas Menarchik attended the opening ceremonies for the USAID-supported projects.
Photo: USAID